

# Spirit of West lives on at Ranger museum

By Peter Elsworth  
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WACO, Texas — When the Texas Rangers, the oldest law enforcement group in North America, were first set up in 1823 to fight off the Indians, the requirements to join were simple.

A man had to be able to "ride, fight and cook," and "the more hard-bitten, the better," according to the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame located in the Baptist stronghold of Waco.

In the hands of such characters, and given the vast and hostile distances involved, justice was often rough and ready.

"Mean as hell, had to kill him," reads the deposition of one cattle rustler's fate.

Since that time, the Rangers have been incorporated into the Texas Department of Public Safety and thoroughly modernized.

"I modernized 'em when I went in there," said Clint Peoples, a legendary Texas lawman who was instrumental in setting up the Hall of Fame. Now the U.S. marshal for the north district of Texas, Peoples was previously senior Ranger captain.

Peoples said in an interview that he standardized the Rangers' dress — "black boots, black belt, black tie, white hat and gabardine suit" — and equipment, including guns and cars.

The Rangers were first organized to protect the early settlers from the Indians, particularly the Apaches and Comanches, when Texas was part of Mexico.

At first, the Indians dominated, shooting 12 arrows in the time it took to fire one shot and reload.

But with the development of a gun with a "re-

volving" chamber, the odds began to turn. Samuel Colt developed the famous six-shooter especially for the Rangers.

After Texas joined the union in 1845, U.S. troops took on a greater role in fighting off the Indians. But during the Civil War, the troops withdrew and the Rangers moved into the abandoned forts.

After the war the Rangers were disbanded, leaving the frontier open to raids by Indians and, increasingly, by cattle rustlers, horse thieves and Mexican bandits. The last of the Indians were driven from Texas by 1881.

Then came the heyday of the cowboys, which lasted about 20 years until the railroads finally came to Texas in the 1880s, according to Tom Burks, the museum's assistant curator.

Men were hired to drive cattle north on The Chisholm Trail over the Red River into "The Indian Lands" (Oklahoma) and on to the railroad terminals in Kansas.

"Stealing a horse was a serious thing," Burks said. "Out on the range, a man without a horse was probably going to die (from lack of water)."

Apart from the outlaws and bandits, trouble erupted when ranchers began fencing in their land. The key development was the 1873 invention of barbed wire, which for the first time gave them an inexpensive way to enclose land.

Tension between cattlemen and ranchers arose because the fences crossed cattle trails and often cut the cattle off from vital water supplies.

"A lot of the old boys didn't like that," said Burks.

In 1874, the Texas state legislature resurrected the Rangers, and they were brought in to deal with

increasing cases of "wire-cutting."

Small towns also often called on the Rangers to quell lawlessness and riots, a task that grew in importance with the discovery of oil.

"We were so busy arresting everyone left and right," Peoples said of his early days in the 1930s, adding that he often raided the illegal dances that sprang up in the oil boom towns.

It was Peoples who ordered the closing of the "Chicken Ranch," a whorehouse immortalized in the play: "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," and who came very close to arresting Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker two days before they were gunned down.

He single-handedly infiltrated and busted the famed Balinese Restaurant (and casino) in Galveston, and he was the lawman who ran a notorious murderer named Franklin Perkins to ground.

"He'd told us he wasn't going to go to Ol' Sparky (the electric chair)," Peoples said. "He'd slithered under this house, see, and when I bent down he fired and a plug of tarpaper went right through my hat. That's when I gave him three loads of buckshot and that was that."

With its exhibits of cowboy and Indian memorabilia, the Hall of Fame is practically a museum of the Wild West. Many items in the collection were donated by curator Gaines de Graffenried, who claims to have "collected everything known to man in my lifetime."

De Graffenried was particularly proud of the cattle baron "thrones," made entirely of longhorn cattle horns, and items from the reign of Maximilian of Austria as Emperor of Mexico.

Maximilian was crowned in 1864 but overthrown three years later.



# Horsemen get ready for season of riding

## and camping in Utah

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Horseback riders will meet the challenge and take advantage of the exceptional equestrian camping facilities available on the Uinta National Forest in central Utah. The International Arabian and Half-Arabian Championship competitive trail ride will take place July 31 through Aug. 1.

The Utah Arabian Horse Club encourages all Arabian riders to get busy. Members say, "Now is the time to start conditioning your horse and enter the competition."

This ride has been a tradition since 1975. The Nebo Loop Trail near Payson, is the designated 70-mile, two-day route. Horseback riders will be riding through aspen stands, grass meadows, pine thickets, red rock country, and conifer canyons. It is home to elk, black bear, beaver, and numerous other wildlife. The majestic Mount Nebo towers to the west, and Loafer Mountain to the north. "There is nothing quite like seeing Utah, as

seeing it from the back of a horse," says Marie Linton, longtime Utah rider.

The trail originates in the Blackhawk Campground on the Uinta National Forest. Easton Brown, respected horseman, says, "Camping at Blackhawk makes trail riding easy." Blackhawk Campground accommodates 1,282 people; Loop E of this campground is specially designed for horsemen. A stock unloading ramp, parking ramps suited for horse rigs, tie stalls situated in each site, ample water, and convenient access to equestrian paths make this location the perfect place for the event to be successful.

Curran Creek Campground and Granite Flat Horse Transfer Station are other Uinta National Forest Service facilities specifically designed to accommodate horses. A new equestrian camping facility will also be constructed this summer in the Box Lake Campground.

# Horse Association

## Announces "Celebration"

2 July 1987

The Heber Valley Horse Association will be holding a "Celebration of the Horse" on July 18 at the county Fairgrounds. The celebration is being held to present all aspects of horses including shoeing, saddle making, rope tying, horse handling, showmanship, etc.

The HVHA is looking for volunteers to help with the celebration. Those seeking more information about the celebration or those wishing to volunteer to help should call Kitty Ferguson at 654-3148 or Sally Quiniers at 654-0160.



# A Celebration of the Horse



23 July 1987

At times nearly 800 spectators gathered to watch one of the many activities during the "Celebration of the Horse" which was held at the fairgrounds last Saturday. One of the guests of honor (pictured above) gladly accepts admiration. For the complete story see 1B.